

DOCTOR BENTLEY'S RIDE

By Courtney Spencer.

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"Yes, Miss, that's the way to the village. So you're the new principal of the Free school! I hope you'll like the place, Miss, and stay with us a while; the last principal, she founded the school



"Doc Bentley, Did You Ask?"

—Miss Brown, from Boston, you know—and she bided here for seven and twenty years until Doc Bentley sent her home to die. Couldn't do nothing for her, he said, and that's saying a heap, for we all thinks a good deal of Doc

Bentley down this way.

"Of course, when they first started this scheme for teaching the poor whites reading and writing, there was some feeling against it in this section. A cracker ought to keep his place, I say, and not to go apeing the learning of us quality folks. But Miss Brown—well, she was a fine lady and I reckon she got us all converted long before Doc Bentley sent her home.

"Doc Bentley, did you ask? Yes, he's been our doctor for nigh upon five years now. That's his house on the hill. But you won't get nothing out of him, Miss, except a civil word when he passes you, maybe, for he isn't a man to talk about himself. So, seeing as I know his story and all the other folks in the place have got it wrong, I'll tell it to you.

"Five years ago Doc Bentley was practicing in Nortonville, a hundred miles across the mountains yonder. He'd passed out of college some three or four years then, and already he'd made quite a reputation among people there. You know Nortonville, you say, Miss? Yes, I've heard it's a fine city, and has a whole lot of rich people there. Doc Bentley was considered the best doctor there, and he used to be thick with all the society folks in the place. He wasn't reserved then, like he is now, but jolly and lively, they tell me—a kind of overgrown boy. He isn't so very old today, except in soul.

"But for all his big practice Bentley wasn't the man to saeri-